

From: Cody Ashe-McNalley
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/28/02 1:39am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Dear United States' Department of Justice,

I am writing to urge the government not to seek any settlement which allows Microsoft to continue the anti-competitive, anti-consumer business practices that it has used, still uses today, and openly plans to continue to use. I have spent my entire professional life working in the fields of information technology and software development. Microsoft has had an unfairly taxing effect on every aspect of the industry I have experience in.

While certainly not all, I believe the following two issues are the primary obstacles in dealing with the Microsoft monopoly: One, their use of proprietary, undocumented, and ever-changing file formats, application program interfaces (APIs), and security authentication methods; two, the draconian and unlawful enforcement of licensing agreements with original equipment manufacturers (OEMs).

The first issue, proprietary file formats, has hindered me personally, and has undoubtedly affected every citizen of the United States who has used Microsoft Office products. As consumers desire more access to the Internet and multimedia files, this problem will only increase. As it is, there is already a huge deficiency in the basic functionality of Microsoft products on the Apple Macintosh operating system.

The second issue, unlawful licensing agreements with OEMs, is analogous to the system of rebates that allowed John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil to maintain a monopoly in the oil industry. There is effectively no point of entry for competition in the market for small business and consumer computing goods in the United States. This has become an indirect tax on every consumer purchasing a personal computer. However, this has probably hurt the small businesses of America most of all. Business today depends on computers, and they have no choice but to become Microsoft customers. Their success depends on Microsoft from their very inception.

The United States has had enough success controlling anti-competitive monopolies to still offer an environment full of opportunity for its citizens, both as consumers and business people. I greatly hope that the United States Department of Justice can persevere in restoring that environment for the twenty-first century.

Sincerely,

Cody Ashe-McNalley

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